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ABSTRACT

This report describes a United Arab Emirates University training program for teacher educators. The program was designed to improve both the overall quality of English language instruction in the country and the English language proficiency level of students by the time they enter higher education, through both instructional improvement and articulation of English language instruction across educational levels. The program for teacher supervisors consisted of 24 training sessions over two semesters, and provided approximately equal time for advanced language instruction and methodological issues, including instructional and classroom management techniques. Course materials were drawn directly from student textbooks, and course instruction was in workshop style to maximize supervisor participation. Participants had opportunities to meet with Ministry of Education officials to exchange expertise and discuss issues. Those teaching the program were University faculty with English-as-a-Second-Language expertise, teacher training experience, and school-level teaching experience. The course was evaluated using three methods: assessment of each workshop session, mid-course evaluation involving supervisor and trainee discussion of the course; and end-of-course evaluation using both questionnaire and discussion. These assessments provided valuable information for course improvement. Three session outlines are appended. (MSE)

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TRAINING SUPERVISORS TO TRAIN TEACHERS: UAE PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

There is an increasing awareness in the United Arab Emirates of the important role of English in both the educational and the economic sectors. This awareness has led to several attempts to look critically at the level of English at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels in order to improve the overall proficiency level of all English learners in the country. In this paper, we will describe and analyze a trainer education program that a group of university lecturers and teacher trainers have developed as an intervention measure to try to improve two major areas: the quality of teacher education in the country and the low proficiency level of the majority of the learners.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of an education/training program for supervisors of English at the national level in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), came out of an awareness of first year university students' low proficiency level in English and the inadequacy of their thinking and study skills for university studies. The goals of the supervisors' course, as it was officially called by the UAE Ministry of Education were first, to share current approaches in teacher education with the participants, and second, to help English teachers adopt ways of improving their students' proficiency in English through teacher-centered training.

The trainees had first hand experience of a teacher /trainee-centered approach to teacher education. With the whole course as an example of how to run several teacher-centered training sessions, we hoped to provide the supervisors with a new and alternative approach to teacher education for pre- and in-service programs. We also hoped that the course would help the supervisors and the teachers reflect on their training and teaching methods respectively.

It has been established (English Language Curriculum Document, 1994) that in-service teacher education in the UAE can be improved in order to prepare English teachers, who come from various educational and cultural backgrounds, to tackle the problem of low English proficiency in the entire country. One of the major

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problems of the current style of teacher education is that it is not teacher-centered and relies heavily on the lecturing approach. Another problem is the multi-cultural and educational backgrounds of English teachers. A third problem is the linearity of teacher education in the country. University lecturers have very little, if any, contact with what is happening at secondary and elementary schools. For their part, secondary and elementary English teachers might not have a precise idea of the requirements at the university and are probably not trained to prepare their students for what awaits them after secondary schools. The secondary school English syllabus, for instance, does not address reading and writing skills in a way that enables students to function at a lower-intermediate level in these two skills. The supervisors' course, therefore, proposes a cyclical approach to teacher education whereby tertiary, secondary, and elementary teachers work together on the issue of improving learners' proficiency levels.

2. THE SUPERVISORS' COURSE

a) Background Information

English is taught as a foreign language in the UAE State schools. It is taught and perceived as just one subject among many in the school syllabus. Arabic is the native language and the language of instruction in the schools and for many subjects at the university. The textbooks and materials used in teaching English have been developed locally, primarily for cultural reasons, by the curriculum department at the ministry of education.

In the past, students were introduced to English language study at grade four of the elementary level when the students were approximately nine years old. However, a major change in the English language curriculum took place. In 1992, English was introduced to grade one and it is estimated that it will take another seven years before these students join the university. The lower primary students (one to three) take an average of seventy hours of English during the academic year; the upper primary and the preparatory take an average of one hundred hours. At the secondary level, the arts students have an average of one hundred and twenty contact hours per year, and the science students complete an average of one hundred and ten.

At present the freshmen who join the English program at the university are placed in three proficiency levels for a one-semester course for each level. These are false beginner, low intermediate, and intermediate.

There are over 3000 teachers of English in the state schools and 55 supervisors. Almost all come from different Arab countries. The teachers are either BA holders or have completed a two-year diploma in education. The supervisors are BA or MA holders with many years of teaching experience. Some are hired as supervisors without any teaching experience in the UAE. Others, after many years of teaching experience in the UAE, are promoted to supervisors after passing a written and an oral exam conducted at a national level for Lead Teachers in the State schools. Each supervisor supervises between fifty and sixty teachers. The role of the Supervisor is to observe the teachers at least twice a year for professional development and rehiring purposes. The Supervisor also offers and organizes in-service training sessions and workshops for the group of teachers he/she supervises. The 55 supervisors report to the Chief Supervisor, who acts as a Coordinator and has an office in the Ministry. The Ministry of Education has nine educational districts in the country.

b) Course Development

The course for supervisors was initiated following the success of a series of in-service training workshops offered to teachers in the Al Ain Educational District. The Ministry initially considered a similar course for teachers all over the country, but for financial and logistical purposes, it was considered more practical to group the supervisors and expose them to the Teacher Training Course. The supervisors will in turn use the course to train the teachers in their respective educational districts.

The feedback from the workshops offered to the Al Ain teachers was highly valuable for the course design and content. A needs analysis was conducted by consulting a number of supervisors for their feedback on the course content. The Chief Supervisor was also contacted for input. He was also asked to review and revise the course content before development. The topics on critical thinking and learner autonomy skills were introduced in order to share with the teachers and the supervisors the work done at the University to upgrade those skills in students entering the university from the state schools.

Overall, the course was designed and developed with the UAE student profile in mind. The Ministry of Education curriculum and materials were used to make the course as practical and as hands-on as possible.

c) Course Organization

The course had twenty-four training sessions. It was offered each Wednesday over two semesters in two locations, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, to make it as convenient as possible for both the participants and the trainers. Each training session was three hours long. An hour and a half was devoted to the advanced language component of the course, while the remaining time was allocated to a methodological issue. The two components were designed to complement each other. While the advanced language component aimed at upgrading English language proficiency, the methodology component focused on providing the supervisors with a hands-on content which could be adapted for classroom use.

d) Course Content (Methodology Part)

1) Listening Strategies
2) Using Videos
3) Reading Strategies
4) Writing Strategies
5) Teaching Grammatical Structures
6) Teaching Vocabulary
7) Strategies for Teaching Speaking and Pronunciation
8) Using Visual Aids
9) Role Play
10) Lesson Plans
11) Classroom Management
12) Group and Pair work
13) Classroom Language
14) Testing and Assessment
15) Textbook Evaluation
16) Syllabus Design and Materials Production
17) Arab Learners Errors and Error Correction
18) Introduction to Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)
19) Motivation and Learner Autonomy
20) Critical Thinking
21) Self Access and Independent Learning
22) Classroom Observation and Peer Observation
23) Teacher Evaluation
24) Supervision

e) Course Characteristics

The course was designed specifically for UAE students, teachers and supervisors with the ultimate aim of better preparing students for university studies. The overwhelming majority of the students joining the UAE University are Ministry of Education school graduates, and the course offered the

opportunity for trainers and trainees to address common student needs. Most of the trainers were familiar with the schools' environment and facilities. They had previously had contact with supervisors via workshops and professional development events offered throughout the country. Previously held training sessions for supervisors at a national level were offered by Western trainers usually not very familiar with the UAE educational environment and the needs of the students and their educators.

The course had a practical focus and was delivered in a workshop style. The intention was to give the supervisors materials, training and teaching techniques that they could use in training their teachers. The teachers, in turn, could use the materials and techniques in the classroom. *The English Language Curriculum Document for Basic and Secondary Education* states that "training courses will... eschew the lecturing approach and concentrate on practical, workshop activities..." (1994, p.53). The course materials were, therefore, taken directly from the students' textbooks. The workshop style of delivery was deliberately chosen to involve the trainees and allow them to experience the activities. In many of the activities, the supervisors took the role of students and performed a variety of activities in all language skills (see course contents).

The course offered opportunities for the supervisors to access the university resources, facilities and materials. Some of the sessions were offered on the university campuses where the trainees were briefed on the curriculum of the university English program, the methodology and the curriculum support activities to show them the teaching and learning environment their students would be joining after leaving secondary school. The course also offered the opportunity for educators from the university and the Ministry of Education to meet and exchange experiences and expertise in the area of TEFL, and, most importantly, to discuss and address the UAE learners' needs. The course has developed a productive professional development environment that will, it is hoped, spread to all the teachers.

The trainers were UAE University teachers with MA and Ph.D. qualifications in TEFL and many years of experience in training teachers and

trainers. All the trainers had at least two years of teaching experience in the UAE f. Therefore, they had a good understanding of the students' profile and learning needs.

The course was designed to target the three thousand teachers of English in the UAE through training their supervisors, who were each required to train the fifty to sixty teachers under their supervision. Direct training of the teachers may have been more beneficial, but it would not have been cost-effective in either time or money.

3. THE TRAINING SESSIONS

As mentioned above, the supervisors met once a week for two consecutive sessions of ninety minutes each. Each session was conducted by a different trainer.

a) A Process Approach

Considering the professional experience of most of the supervisors and their academic background, some of them with Masters degrees in Applied Linguistics, the general approach adopted for the training sessions was a process approach. The philosophy behind this approach is that both the trainer and the trainee are equal partners and participants in a learning experience (Woodward, 1992; Parrot, 1993). The supervisors' input was solicited prior to and during the training sessions. As mentioned above, the course content was designed after a needs analysis had been conducted. At the beginning of the course, supervisors were provided with a complete plan of the sessions. They were asked prior to every session to read (if they had the time and resources) and give some thoughts about the content.

When asked about the training sessions they usually give to their teachers, some of the supervisors mentioned two approaches: the exposé and the lecture approach.

In the exposé approach the supervisor assigns a number of topics or questions to the teachers who would prepare an exposé. This involves reading, taking notes, and preparing a talk. The teacher would then give a presentation to his/her

colleagues in one of the in-service training sessions. The floor would then be opened for discussion of the topic.

The supervisors are also responsible for organizing and managing training sessions. These are done either in the form of a lecture or a workshop. Most of these workshops deal with classroom management, but can extend to include such issues as classroom discourse, language interference, and error analysis. The exposé style of in-service training no doubt helps teachers keep up with pedagogical development and exchange teaching ideas. It does, however, have some limitations. The participant in an exposé or a lecture training session is supposed to be a receiver of knowledge poured into his/her mind by the trainer. Parrott (1993) mentions the *Jug and Mug* approach. This metaphor explicitly describes a whole tradition of educational training:

This style was avoided during our training sessions. One of the goals of the course was to provide the supervisors with a variety of training styles.

The general goals of the training sessions as follows:

- Raise awareness and share experiences
- Clarify certain issues and concepts
- Give assistance when needed
- Boost a feeling of professionalism

Because it was thought that the trainees joined the program as participants and not as passive knowledge receivers, we avoided spotlight presentations and favored open discussions of the course content. The participants, however, did expect some kind of product in the form of a set of guidelines, handouts, summaries, and references for future use in in-service training sessions with their teachers (see appendices A, B, C). The variety of the training processes included the use of whole group discussions, workshops, brainstorming sessions, and situational tasks. For example, in a session on motivation and independent learning the trainees were presented with the following situation: how would you help a teacher who tells you

"my students are not motivated, they hate English, and some of them are disrupting the lessons"?

In most of the sessions we conducted, a task-based approach was followed. The participants engaged in group or pair work to work on a particular task. The length of the task depended on the nature of the topic at hand. Some of the materials were developed by the trainers to meet the goals of some of the sessions. We did also make use of some professional texts such as the tasks developed by Parrott (1993).

b) Classroom Management

Classroom management was a particularly important issue during the whole course. Because of the nature of the course and the academic and professional levels of the trainees, there was a concern about how to manage a group of trainers. It was made explicit at the beginning of many sessions that the trainees should not expect "correct" answers to the tasks and questions they had to deal with. In fact, once this concept was established we felt that they were encouraged to participate and were willing to put forward suggestions and recommendations for future sessions. The emphasis was more on the exchange of ideas and on thinking through several issues than on coming to final conclusions. The challenges of this process approach were reflected in the managing of the discussion tasks and the small group work. Because the trainees had a lot to say about all the topics of the course, there was a risk of getting carried away during discussions. This was managed by planning the main points of the discussion ahead of time and by displaying them on a white board. During group discussions the trainer had to make sure that all the trainees had an equal chance of participation. On many occasions participants with tendencies to dominate discussions were assigned roles as group leaders in charge of taking notes, keeping the agenda, and reporting to the whole group. This was an attempt to ensure the discussion did not diverge from the main point and to encourage the quieter trainees to participate.

Activities and discussion tasks were always "rounded up" by the trainers in various ways. This took place after the participants had reported back their work to each other. The trainer would add some points to those raised by the trainees, if considered necessary, and sum up the lesson. Parrott (1993) warns against assuming

that the trainer has to add points to the discussion. He states that one has to be "circumspect in doing this as the points which seem crucial or even obvious to the trainer may well not be appropriate to the participants at their particular stage in thinking through the issues" (p. 13).

The following graph describes the process approach of the training sessions:

THE PROCESS APPROACH

Various types of equipment were used throughout the course: video, audio cassette recorder, OHP, computers, boards, cards, textbooks and posters.

4. EVALUATION

The evaluation of the supervisors' training course has attempted to assess the extent to which the course content and delivery style have met the goals initially set for the course. It was also used to assess the training sessions and their relevance to the supervisors and the environment in which they worked.

Three types of evaluation instruments were developed in the course design. The first was, the evaluation of each session. Each supervisor was given an

evaluation form at the end of each training session that mainly addressed its usefulness and relevance to the course goals. The course coordinator in collaboration with the two senior trainers in the program acted on the recommendations and made any necessary changes.

Second, there was a mid-course evaluation where the supervisors were offered the opportunity to discuss the course as a group with the trainers. The open group evaluation was also very valuable for the trainers. In this session the supervisors communicated their area of expertise as supervisors, where they asked for more sessions on supervision and classroom observation. This request was included in the second part of the course.

Third, there was an end-of-course evaluation which took place during the final course session, before the graduation ceremony. The fifty-five supervisors were divided into three groups with one of the senior trainers as a facilitator. The task was to evaluate the course through discussion at the end of which they filled in a form that addressed the course's strengths and weaknesses, the usefulness of the materials and techniques they were exposed to and their suggestions for areas of future cooperation between the university and the ministry of education. Overall, the supervisors felt that a more elaborate and thorough needs analysis should have been conducted before the beginning of the course. This needs analysis would have directed the trainers to a better understanding of the supervisors' needs, their working environment, and the resources available to them. The supervisors also believed that some of the materials were not tailored to the needs of the teachers in the UAE and their local situations. They thought that the materials of the course should have been based more on the students' textbooks. They believed that some of the materials were repeated in some sessions of the course and that innovation was not always sought in the selection. Because they knew that the university trainers were academics and had access to better library facilities, the supervisors expressed preference for some academic texts adapted from newly published literature in the area of training and supervision. They also considered that with twenty-four sessions the course was too long.

The feedback from this evaluation session was productive, positive, and valuable. It generated useful insights for future training programs for the ministry of education. Overall, the supervisors felt that the course was a productive forum

where they had the opportunity for extensive discussion with the trainers about the needs of the students and the teachers. In addition, the trainers gained a better understanding of the educational environments and the challenges facing students, teachers, and supervisors. A channel of communication has been established between the two institutions and as a result of the course the ministry of education requested a similar program to train the English supervisors in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) programs.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

To promote the learning and teaching of English and to improve the educational skills of the students entering the tertiary level in the UAE, it is important that the university and the Ministry of Education cooperate in the area of training and curriculum.

In-service training of teachers should be focused on UAE learners' specific needs, namely the areas of critical thinking and study skills, reading and writing, since English is taught for academic purposes at the university. In the final evaluation, the supervisors recommended that their teachers take a training course on discourse analysis and advanced writing techniques. They also expressed the need for their teachers to upgrade their fluency. For this purpose, the facilities and resources of the university can be of great assistance.

The supervisors need to be allocated more time for training so that teachers are offered opportunities to get together to address their needs and the needs of their students in the different educational districts.

Supervisors would also benefit from in-service training in the areas of teacher training and supervision. The supervisors themselves suggested more training sessions and materials in these two areas, although they knew that the course was primarily designed to train them to train their teachers. One of the challenges of this course was that some supervisors were more interested in using the training sessions as a forum to exchange expertise on the ways they supervise their teachers, the materials and techniques used, and the feedback they should give to their teachers in certain areas than in looking at new approaches in teacher training. They also wanted the university trainers to update them with the current TESL literature

as most of them do not have the time and the resources to keep up with recent developments in the field. Their request was a fair one as they were aware of the need to develop professionally in their areas of expertise.

The university and the Ministry of Education should consider cooperation in the area of curriculum and testing by setting common goals and objectives for the teaching of English. The university's goals would become the continuation of the ministry's goals. Experts from both institutions need to work together in designing and developing student textbooks, teacher manuals, teaching aids, and supplementary materials. The supervisors also communicated the need for the university to assist with the upgrading of the testing policies and procedures presently used.

CONCLUSION

Without attending the supervisors' training sessions of their teachers, it would be difficult to assess the extent to which the supervisors have really benefited from the course and the relevance of the course materials to the teachers. It would also be difficult to measure how much of these materials were used in training the teachers. Finally, to assess the effect of the course on the teachers, the ultimate target, one would have to observe the teachers after they have been trained by their supervisors.

On the whole, the supervisors' course marked the first direct contribution of university TEFL lecturers in the training of their colleagues from secondary and elementary schools. They shared their expertise and learned about the process of teacher education in the UAE. The challenges met during the course will certainly help in the design of future teacher education programs.

Appendix A

Supervisors' Course

Role Play and Simulation

Objective: the aim of this session is to discuss the place of role play and simulation in the English syllabus. The participants will take part in a role play and a simulation and then debrief the two activities.

Role Play: suppose you are given the following role card:

You bought a pair of shoes two days ago. You have discovered two scratches in them. Take them back to the shop and explain the problem. You do not want another pair, you want your money back. Be polite at all times.

In this role play the learner might be free to choose the language to use and his/her attitude but the way the situation develops, and its eventual outcome have been decided. The student is playing (performing) an assigned role.

Aspects of role behaviour involved in role play

Degree of formality: This depends on the context. Talking to a stranger "Excuse me, could you tell me where the town hall is?"
talking to a friend: "where's the town hall, then?"
"Good morning, Mr. Ahmed" talking to a boss
"Hi there" talking to a friend.

Register: specific features of language. e.g. occupational register: two medical doctors talking about their work will use many words and phrases from the field of medicine. this makes it very difficult for a listener not familiar with the field to understand.
for role plays: students can, for example, be exposed to doctor-patient discourse, car mechanic, etc.

Function: do we wish to express an opinion, agree or disagree, to persuade or complain?. In any role learners will need a variety of functions.

Attitude: how we feel towards the situation and other people. Learners can be shown how to make clear what their feelings are (delight, anger, surprise, confusion, etc.). They also must learn how to recognize these feelings in their interlocutors. "I'm afraid I have a complaint to make " is polite while "this is too much", said after the fourth time one complained about the same goods, reveals frustration and anger.

Para-linguistic features: language has to be selected and said correctly. Stress, intonation, rhythm, tone of voice, speed of delivery, pitch, and loudness have to be taken into consideration.

Extra-linguistic features: In face-to-face interaction, it is important to know the appropriate gestures and facial expressions which accompany the language. Body language is culturally defined, British people, for instance, shake hands on fewer occasions then the Arabs.

Preparing a role play

Selection: the teacher has to select a role play that meets students' language needs. For a beginner level class, a shopping situation is appropriate.

Situation: In a shop
Roles: Customer and shop assistant
Formality: Formal
Attitudes: Neutral, polite
Language functions: Asking for goods.
Asking for, and giving, prices.
Asking for, and giving, amounts.

New material (linguistic preparation)
Requisite learner knowledge.
Names of common shop goods.
Names of shops selling these.
Names of amounts (half a kilo, a pound).
Names of packaging (a packet, a jar, etc.).
difference between number and amount (much/many).
The English monetary system.
Polite requests for goods.

Assumed knowledge
It is assumed that before the preparation, the learners know:
Numbers to 100.
Greetings ('good morning goodbye', etc.).
'Please', 'thank you', 'here you are'.
a way of asking the 'name' of things in English (e.g. What's this called in English?').
the question 'can you?. (e.g. 'Can you buy apples at the ----------?').

Requisite teaching aids
Pictures or realia of common shop goods, price tags, toy English money, pictures of the shops to be mentioned, role play cards, a model dialogue.

Situational and cultural preparation (e.g., ways of greeting, non-verbal behaviour)

Factual preparation (where you can buy things).

Students should be given enough time for practice.
Follow-up

Problems with role play

Time: the above beginner role play might take up to four hours of class preparation.
Organization: the setting can be a problem, tables cannot be moved.

Samples of Role plays

You are on holiday in England. You bought an expensive dictionary (for your English classes!) two days ago. You have discovered that 20 pages are blank (show them to the assistant). You have lost the receipt. You want your money Back.

You work in a bookshop. Ask the customer if you can help him/her. Ask if he/she is sure the book was bought in your shop. Ask for the receipt. Offer to order a new dictionary
(you have no copies left).

You lost a ----------on the train/bus to----------yesterday at----------(time). Go to the lost property office. Describe what you lost (colour, size, material, etc.). None of the
----------s the attendant shows you are yours. Ask him/her what you should do now.

You are the attendant at a lost property office. Ask the person what he /she has lost, and where/when it was lost. Ask him/her to describe the object in detail. Show him/her some objects. Suggest he/ she comes back tomorrow.

You meet----------in the street. You are fine. Ask----------if he/she would like a cup of
tea/coffee in a cafe. There is a nice cafe in ----------Street.

You meet ----------in the street. Ask how he/she is (you are fine). You would like a cup of coffee.

You go to a restaurant with----------. Ask about a table. Ask----------what he/she wants. Ask if he/she wants a drink with the meal. Order the food and drink. Pay the bill.

You go to a restaurant with----------. Look at the menu and tell----------what you would like to eat and drink.

You are the waiter. You have a table for two. Give the customers a menu. Take their order. give them the bill.

You are in a new town, at the railway station. You want to go to the Palace Hotel. stop someone and ask the way.

You are at the railway station. Help the tourist.

Go to a travel agency and book a flight to Cairo. Ask for accommodation and tours.

You are a travel agent. Help a customer who wants to have information about travel and accommodation.

Appendix B

Supervisors' Course

Attitudes, Motivation and Learner Autonomy

Objective: the aim of this session is to discuss the roles of attitudes and motivation in learning a foreign language. We will also discuss ways of increasing learner autonomy.

Attitudes and Motivation: They are both considered as affective factors in language learning. The two terms are not always clearly distinguished in applied linguistics literature. Attitudes and motivation have been lumped together as factors responsible for relative success or failure in foreign language learning.

Attitude: Ajzen (1988) defines attitude as " a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or an event" (p. 4).
Attitudes include three elements:

Cognitive component: beliefs about the object.
Affective component: amount of positive or negative feeling one has towards the object.
Conative component: one's behavioural intentions, or one's actual behaviour towards the object.

Attitudes are learned and therefore capable of changing by further learning.

Motivation: Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two types of motivation:

Instrumental Motivation: the purposes of language study reflect the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement, such as getting ahead in one's occupation.
Integrative Motivation: the learner wishes to learn more about the other cultural community because he/she is interested in it in an open-minded way to the point of eventually being accepted as a member of that group (p. 3).

The relation of attitude to motivation is dependent on the type of motivation. An integrative motivation presupposes a positive attitude towards the target language and culture. A learner who is instrumentally motivated does not necessarily have a positive attitude.

Learner Autonomy

Autonomous learning is a matter of a learning style but it can be fostered and encouraged. A learning style is an individual predisposition to learn in a particular way.

Syllabus free/bound learners: Syllabus free learners are believed to learn from

elements in the general learning context and outside it whereas syllabus-bound learners require the packaging and presentation of data which the teacher provides.

Task A: Motivation (see handouts).

Task B : Learner Autonomy (see handouts).

These two tasks are just a suggestion of how to run a training session (discussion) about motivation and learner autonomy. We will discuss other ways of managing training sessions.

Please note that the purpose of these tasks is to raise awareness of such topics. As participants are experienced and come from different backgrounds, the trainer's role is to facilitate discussions and not to provide right or wrong answers.

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Appendix C

Supervisors' Course

TEXTBOOK EVALUATION

Objective: the aim of this session is to discuss some of the current principles in textbook evaluation and conduct a mini evaluation of several textbooks.

1- **Rationale for textbook evaluation**

pre-course evaluation

post-course evaluation

2- **Textbook as syllabus?**

3- **Basic principles for materials evaluation**

A- Relate the teaching materials to your aims and objectives. (The aims of a teaching programme should determine the course materials to be used and not vice-versa).

B- Be aware of what language is for and select teaching materials which will help equip your students to language effectively for their own purpose (try to distinguish between e.g., participation in a language drill, a coursebook dialogue or a role-play and the ability to carry through a real transaction. Does the text prepare the learners to express their feelings and attitudes about real things or events? look at the ministry books (different levels) and decide if they perform this function.

C- Keep your students learning needs in mind
How is language selected, graded, presented, and practiced?
How are learning units presented? Are they related to each other? can learners relate new language items to what they already know?
Does the text help stimulate the learners? is it intellectually stimulating?
Is it usable with small groups and pairs?

D- Consider the relationship between language, the learning process and the learner

The text must have a balance between the needs of the learner as an individual and the linguistic difficulties inherent in language learning.

4- Selection and grading of language items
Structural and functional approaches
Subject-centred approach and student-centred approach

Grading: the speed with which the learners progress, how much new material is introduced in a new unit, how close together or how far apart new grammatical structures are in relation to each other, and how much vocabulary is introduced in each unit. How much of practice material is provided and in what form? (role-play, dialogue, drill...).

Recycling: is there adequate recycling of new items. Lexical items, for example, are best learned when they are recycled five or six times.

Linear progression and cyclical progression.

A text with a linear progression deals with each item exhaustively before passing on to the other item.

A text with a cyclical progression moves fairly quickly from one language item to another and then progressively returns to each item throughout the text.

5- **Mini evaluation session**: group work

Participants will evaluate textbooks according to one or two evaluation principles.

How far do you think the objectives which you identified are appropriate for the learning needs of the students for whom the coursebook was designed?

Presentation session.

Note: These appendices are samples of activities and guidelines that were used during the training course.

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